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USDA Inside USDA Information

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Gleanings that might interest you this week include some pointers for intern programs, notes about how SCS has covered energy in agriculture...a JCP visit to USDA...some background on measurements while we're going metric...that design manual we've been promising...and of course some notices about jobs and workshops.

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JCP STAFF VISITS US

Despite the busy hearing schedule on printing we've told you about before, the staff of the Joint Committee on Printing visited USDA this week. It was mostly a get-acquainted session, since many of the staff are new and in GPA's reorganization there were several of us the JCP staff had not met. Secretary Bergland also met with the group.

Although the visit included a tour of USDA's plant, the trek was not an official inspection. However, in view of the new, proposed changes in printing regulations "Inside..." has mentioned to you in past issues, we're certain we shall hear more soon about printing in USDA. "Inside..." will keep you informed.

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MEASURES MADE INTERESTING

One of the most interesting explanations of weights and measurements we've seen in a long time came to our attention this week. It's available in the form of a booklet called "The Rule of Thumb and the Metric System," issued in 1977 by the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and authored by Jim McCutchen of that agency.

Jim has a few copies left of the booklet which he has given "Inside..." So if you want one, drop us a note (c/o Hal Taylor, GPA) and we'll send you one.

As Jim says, "...it seems a shame to give up the old system. There was a certain sense of accomplishment when we finally learned and could remember that two pints make one quart, four quarts make one gallon, and 31 1/2 gallons make one barrel (except for oil where it is 42) and that there are 5,280 feet in one mile, or 16 ounces in one pound, 2,000 pounds in one ton (2,240 in one long ton) or that an acre contains 43,560 square feet."

"There's no logic in that system; in fact, there is no system in that system," he points out.

By the way, did you know an acre was defined by Henry VIII as the area of land a man could plow with a yoke of oxen in 1 day between sunrise and sunset on the day of the summer solstice? How 'bout that?

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THAT DESIGN MANUAL

Speaking of standards, that long awaited manual on design should be available in a few weeks...or less. We've seen a few completed copies...got 'em to show the JCP staff.

David Sutton (who has just returned from China) and Warren Bell say printed quantities should be distributed to agencies here in D.C. within a couple of weeks, possibly during a meeting with various publications and printing folks in a meeting they will call when the books are ready.

Copies also will be available at a price. We'll let you know as soon as that's firm...plus how to make your order.

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ENERGIZE YOURSELF ON ENERGY ITEMS

Bob Norton, working on energy from GPA's public liaison section, brought to our attention the September issue of "Soil & Water Conservation News," SCS in-house newsletter which devoted major coverage to energy and energy conservation. He says there's a lot of good material that should be useful to ag communicators.

And he's right. The issue contains a rundown on the energy security act, a feature on how biogas from manure powers a dairy farm in Pennsylvania, a discussion of residues and their trade-offs between erosion versus energy and a few shorter articles on fuels that don't use food, sugarbeets especially bred for use in making fuel alcohol and another one on biomass as an alternative energy source.

If you didn't get a copy of the newsletter, you probably can get one if you'll write Hubert Kelley or Lee Shields in SCS information. (Soil Conservation Service, USDA, Washington 20250)

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TO PLACE OR TRAIN

You who place students and you who hire students should be interested in an article by W. David Downey, Purdue U. prof in ag econ, which ran in the Sept. issue of "Agri-Marketing."

Called "Companies Recruit Students as Their Minor League Teams," the article contains a checklist of 16 points worth looking over if you want to develop or see who's got a good intern program for students. Included are such things as well-defined objectives, understood and accepted by the organization's personnel; an active recruiting program to insure proper selection of interns; carefully thought out experiences that are useful; adequate compensation; careful monitoring; "in-tune" supervision; weekly reporting by interns; an orientation program; periodic contacts to make sure no problems are brewing; any special projects; a debriefing, recognition and post evaluation program...and so on.



"Inside..." gets no commission, but you can get reprints of the article for a buck...quantities at lesser rates...by writing Agri-Marketing, 5520-G, Touhy Ave., Skokie, Illinois 60077.

Another article in the same issue by Patricia Wilde quotes Jim Evans, U. of Illinois, and others of land-grant universities who are helping to train and place ag comm students.

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WOULD YOU GO?

Some time ago, we mentioned to you that Hugh Cameron, Washington State U., hoped to do a study of the communication activities during the blowup of Mt. St. Helens. Now we read that a rural sociologist there has. At least, he's studied how people in eastern Washington learned of the May 18 eruption.

Of 1,023 individuals he contacted for the study, 51.9% first learned of the eruption from a friend, relative or neighbor. The survey showed that by noon of May 18--some 3 hours after the eruption--more than 61% of the respondents had learned of the eruption. By 6 p.m., the figure was 97%.

The researcher, Don Dillman, concluded that relatives are very important sources in times of uncertainty. And he says people rely on not just one source of inf but various sources to get different things. People wanting inf on what to do went to radio first rather than TV. TV tended to present the broader, bigger picture of what was going on.

In the event of another eruption, Dillman said 56% of the respondents said they would turn to radio first; 24% said they would tune in TV first; less than 1% said they would rely on newspapers.

Oh yes, we found out about Dillman's study by reading the newspaper.

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ANOTHER SCIENCE
CONFAB

Also from Washington State U., Terry Day reminds us of the national "Communicating University Research" conference to be held in Alexandria, Va. on Oct. 22-24. It's sponsored by CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) and is for science writers and editors...all folks who cover research for agriculture, Sea-grant operations, engineering, government and so on. Fee to register is \$125...interested folks should get their intentions in by Oct. 15 to Communicating University Research, CASE, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Unfortunately, the conference coincides with the Region B meeting of the ACE western region to be held in Colorado. Terry, who will be here, hopes to visit the site of the Battle of Gainesville where his great grandpappy took a Minie ball in the knee. Anyone volunteering to guide Terry when he's here would be appreciated.

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ON THE MOVE

Marilee Menard left the Department last week where she's been director of inf and legislative affairs for the Food Safety and Quality Service. Hereafter, she'll be director of public affairs for the American Meat Institute.

Kevin Murray has been acting director of inf and legislative affairs for some time while Marilee has served on an assignment with one the FSQS program divisions. He will continue in the acting spot.

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LOOKING TO MOVE

Jack Roney with the World Board (that's short for the World Food and Agricultural Outlook and Situation Board) tells us that Martha Halperin is looking for a writing job at the GS-5 or 7 level. She's been 2 years teaching English for the Peace Corps in Morocco and has a B.A. in comparative literature from Brown U. Also, she has some writing experience with the Federal Energy Admin. and speaks, French, German and Arabic fluently. Her address and phone are: 1674 Wainwright Dr., Reston, Va. 22090, (703) 471-5798.

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JOB IN INDIA

Jack Spaven, retired from the U. of Vermont and elsewhere, called to ask "Inside..." to note that the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is looking for a research editor. Person hired should have a couple of years technical writing experience in research publications, an agricultural background, especially in crops and plant breeding if possible. Work will be to edit agricultural research publications along with about 30 other inf people and about 100 scientists. Location of ICRISAT is Hyderabad, India.

If interested, contact Jack at 14 Brewer Parkway, South Burlington, Vermont 05401 or call him at (802) 862-0993.

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AND...AT TEXAS A&M

In a letter from Bill Tedrick, Texas A&M U., we've learned that he's recruiting for a replacement for Jim Whitman who's been the project leader for broadcast media. Jim has gone to the Educational Media Center at the U. of Michigan.

A master's in broadcast journalism is required...5-10 years' commercial or public broadcast work experience and specific production skills in film, radio and videotape technology is desirable...with emphasis on ag broadcasting. Contact Bill for more inf and details if you wish. Applications can go to Delbert O. Black, Personnel Officer, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, 104K System Admin. Bldg., College Station, Texas 77843.

Bill also reminds us to remind you that his position still is open. He continues to "hold forth" as department head as applications come in, however.

He also said Bonnie Stewart, experiment station publications editor, plans to retire in January.

